What is Claimed is!

~~CLAIMS.~~

1. Training apparatus for training a user to engage in transactions with another person whom the apparatus is arranged to simulate, the apparatus comprising:

an input for receiving input dialogue from a user;

a lexical store containing data relating to individual words of said input dialogue;

a rule store containing rules specifying grammatically allowable relationships between words of said input dialogue;

a transaction store containing data relating to allowable transactions between said user and said person;

a processor arranged to process the input dialogue to recognise the occurrence therein of words contained in said lexical store in the relationships specified by the rules contained in said rule store in accordance with the data specified in the transaction store, and, in dependence upon said recognition, to generate output dialogue indicating when correct input dialogue has been recognised; and

an output device for making the output dialogue available to the user.

2. Apparatus according to claim 1, in which said rule store contains first rules comprising criteria specifying correct relationships between words of said word store, and, associated with said first rules, one or more second rules each corresponding to a said first rule but with one relationship criterion relaxed.

3. Apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said relationship criteria correspond to agreements between words (for example, agreements of gender or number).

4. Apparatus according to ~~any preceding~~ claim, in which the processor is arranged to generated output dialogue responsive to input dialogue, and to detect recognised errors in said input dialogue, and, on detection thereof, to indicate said recognised errors separately of said responsive output dialogue.

5. Apparatus according to claim 4 ~~when appended to claim 2 or claim 3~~, in which said processor is arranged to detect said recognised errors on detection of input dialogue containing words which meet said second, but not said first, rules.

6. Apparatus according to ~~any preceding~~ claim which is arranged to provide language training, in which said rules, said words, and said output dialogue are in a training target language, and further arranged to generate user guidance dialogue in a source language for said user and different to said target language.

7. Apparatus according to claim 6 in which the user guidance dialogue comprises guidance as to the meaning of the output dialogue.

8. Apparatus according to claim 6 ~~or claim 7~~ in which the user guidance dialogue comprises an explanation of any detected errors in the input dialogue.

9. Apparatus according to ~~any of~~ claims 6 ~~to 8~~, in which the user guidance dialogue indicates suitable further input dialogue which could be provided.

10. Apparatus according to ~~any preceding~~ claim in which said input dialogue and/or said output dialogue comprise text.

11. Apparatus according to ~~any of~~ claims 1 ~~to 9~~ in which said input dialogue comprises speech, and further comprising a speech recogniser arranged to recognise the words of said speech.

12. Apparatus according to ~~any~~ claims 1 ~~to 9~~ in which said output dialogue comprises speech, said apparatus further comprising a speech synthesizer.

13. Apparatus according to ~~any preceding~~ claim further comprising a user interface arranged to accept said input dialogue and make available said output dialogue to the user.

14. Apparatus according to claim 13, in which said user interface comprises a display and in which said output dialogue is displayed on said display.

15. Apparatus according to claim 14 when appended to any of claims 6 to 9, in which said user guidance text is normally not displayed on said display, and further comprising an input device via which a user may selectively cause the display of said user guidance text on said display.

16. Apparatus according to ~~any of~~ claims 13 ~~to 15~~, in which said user interface is located remotely from said processor and is coupled thereto via a communications channel.

17.   Language training apparatus comprising a processor arranged to accept input dialogue in the target language, to detect recognised errors in said input dialogue, to generate responsive output dialogue in the target language and, when a said recognised error is detected, to generate a separate indication

5   of the presence of said recognised error.

18.   Apparatus according to claim 17 in which the separate indication of the recognised error is an indication in the target language.

10   19.   Apparatus according to claim 17 or claim 18 in which the separate indication comprises explanatory text in a source language of the user different to said target language.